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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): THOM-SON LICENSING S.A. [FR/FR]; 46, Quai A. Le Gallo, F-92648 Boulogne (FR).
- (71) Applicant and
- (72) Inventor: ZHANG, Junbiao [CN/US]; 20 Jenna Drive, Bridgewater, NJ 08807 (US).
- (74) Agents: TRIPOLI, Joseph, S. et al.; c/o Thomson Licensing Inc., Two Independence Way, Suite 200, Princeton, NJ 08540 (US).

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(54) Title: SESSION KEY MANAGEMENT FOR PUBLIC WIRELESS LAN SUPPORITING MULTIPLE VIRTUAL OPERA-**TORS**

(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for managing a session key for allowing a mobile terminal to access a wireless local area network (WLAN). The invention provides for establishing a first secure channel between an access point and a virtual operator, and suggesting a session key to the virtual operator from the access point. A second secure channel is established between the virtual operator and a user, and the session key is sent to the user via the second secure channel upon successful user authentication. The mobile terminal accesses the WLAN using the session key.